

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 04932 171935Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9768

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 4932

EXDIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION KINSHASA 17 MAY
REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUBUMBASHI 0493

EXDIS

FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS PINS CG CASC
SUBJ: SHABA ATTACK: SAFETY OF AMERICANS AT KOLWEZI

REF: KINSHASA 4852

1. THERE IS GROWING CONVICTION IN LUBUMBASHI THAT ONLY RE-
SOLUTION TO KOLWEZI OCCUPATION PROBLEM WILL BE PROMPT MILITARY
ACTION BY ONE OF WESTERN POWER.

2. GENERAL BELIEF IS THAT ZAIRIAN MILITARY FORCES WILL NOT BE
ABLE TO RETAKE KOLWEZI, ALTHOUGH SERIOUS EFFORT SEEMS TO BE
PRESENTLY UNDERWAY. SNEL REPORTS HEAVY FIGHTING IN CITY AFTERNOON
OF MAY 17. FAZ PRESENTLY SEEMS TO BE ON THE INITIATIVE. RE-
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INFORCEMENTS ALSO SEEM TO BE ARRIVING FROM BOTH NORTH AND EAST.
METHODIST SOURCES IN KOLWEZI BROKE IN DURING RADIO CHECK TO NOTE
BOMBARDMENT ON ALL SIDES.

3. IF FAZ SECCEEDS, CITY MAY BE RETAKEN. IF FAZ IS REPULSED,
FEW PEOPLE EXPECT FAZ TO BE ABLE TO LAUNCH A SECOND MAJOR ATTACK.
SOME FAZ DESERTIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN NOTED, ALTHOUGH DISCIPLINE

SEEMS TO BE HOLDING BETTER THAN LAST YEAR. IF FAZ DOES NOT SUCCEED, ALREADY SERIOUS MORALE PROBLEMS LIKELY TO GROW, LEADING TO INCREASED DESERTIONS OR POSSIBLY MUTINY, ENDANGERING POPULATION OF ALL OTHER COMMUNITIES IN SHABA.

4. OTHER REPORTS HAVE INDICATED THAT GROUP OF INFILTRATORS ALREADY IN LUBUMBASHI READY TO STRIKE. MARCH OF SUPPORT SCHEDULED FOR MAY 17 CANCELLED ALLEGEDLY BECAUSE AUTHORITIES FEARED INFILTRATORS WOULD USE MARCH TO CAUSE CHAOS AND POSSIBLY SEIZE LUBUMBASHI.

5. I HAVE TALKED PRIVATELY WITH UMBANXO PICQUET, AND ROCHER OF GECAMINES, REGIONAL COMMISSIONER EFAMBE, BELGIAN CONSUL GENERAL VAN MOSSEFELDT, AND OTHERS. ALL BELIEVE SITUATION IS VERY SERIOUS AND ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC FAZ CAN RECAPTURE KOLWEZI. BELGIAN CONSUL GENERAL TALKS AS THOUGH HE RECOMMENDED MILITARY INTERVENTION BY HIS GOVERNMENT, BUT HAS RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT USG OPPOSED SUCH ACTION. HE URGED CONSULATE TO PUSH FOR STRONGER SUPPORT. ROCHER SAID AFTER MEETING WITH AMB ROSS ON MAY 16 FRENCH ARE WAITING FOR BELGIAN INITIATIVE BECAUSE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF BELGIANS IN KOLWEZI, BUT THEY MAY RUN OPERATION THEMSELVES. FRENCH ALSO SAID TO BE AWAITING AMERICAN SUPPORT. EACH HAS ASKED WHAT THE UNITED STATES PLANS TO DO AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ALERT BY 82ND AIRBORNE. WHEN EXPLANATION GIVEN, THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMPT ACTION HAS BEEN EMPHASIZED BY THEM.

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6. COMMENT: TOP OFFICIALS IN SHABA MUCH MORE CONCERNED THIS YEAR ABOUT SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION THAN AT ANY TIME DURING 1977 FIGHTING. I AM PASSING ABOVE INFORMATION SUPPORT RECOMMENDATION MADE IN PARA 5 OF REFTEL. I BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE ADDED THAT PROMPT ACTION IS DESIREABLE BECAUSE OF DAILY DETERIORATION OF CONDITIONS IN KOLWEZI, AND LIKELIHOOD THAT FAZ DISCIPLINE WILL NOT HOLD FOR EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME IF PRESENT RELIEF OPERATION FAILS.

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